

## CLAIMS

The invention claimed is:

1. A computer system for presenting a plurality of items of multiple types to a user, the system comprising:
  - a universal data store containing said plurality of items stored in accordance with a universal data schema and containing metadata corresponding to at least a portion of the items, wherein the metadata is stored in accordance with an item decoration schema; and
  - a shell for presenting said plurality of items in the universal data store to a user, wherein the shell is configured to present the portion of items with said corresponding metadata to the user with an item decoration view and further configured to present the items without said corresponding metadata to the user in accordance with a default display view.
2. The computer system of Claim 1, wherein said universal data schema includes one or more declared properties.
3. The computer system of Claim 2, wherein each of said plurality of items includes declarations associated with said one or more declared properties.
4. The computer system of Claim 2, wherein said shell utilizes said one or more declared properties to present the items without said corresponding metadata in accordance with said default display view.
5. The computer system of Claim 1, wherein said metadata includes item decoration data.

6. The computer system of Claim 5, wherein said item decoration data identifies a subset of said metadata containing high value data.
7. The computer system of Claim 6, wherein said high value data is associated with information to be displayed to a user.
8. The computer system of Claim 5, wherein said item decoration data includes data indicating a format aspect associated with presentment of said metadata to a user.
9. The computer system of Claim 8, wherein said format aspect is selected from a list including: data formatting, sort order, icon formatting, and associated controls.
10. The computer system of Claim 8, wherein said format aspect includes one or more verbs, said verbs being associated with operations to be performed on selected items.
11. The computer system of Claim 10, wherein said operations are performed by one or more applications launched to perform said verbs with respect to said selected items.
12. The computer system of Claim 1, wherein said shell is further configured to present a set of items selected from said plurality of items according to a shell decoration view.
13. The computer system of Claim 12, wherein said set of items includes one or more items having metadata stored in accordance with a first item decoration schema and further includes one or more items having metadata stored in accordance with a second item decoration schema.
14. The computer system of Claim 12, wherein said shell decoration view includes one or more display aspects appropriate for displaying each of said set of items to a user.

15. The computer system of Claim 14, wherein each of said set of items include a common characteristic.

16. The computer system of Claim 15, wherein said common characteristic is selected from a list including: document file, image file, audio file, and video file.

17. The computer system of Claim 12, wherein said one or more of said set of items are associated with an item decoration view that conflicts with said shell decoration view.

18. The computer system of Claim 12, wherein said shell is further configured to present one or more of said set of items with decorative elements associated with an item decoration view and wherein said decorative elements do not conflict with said shell decoration view.

19. The computer system of Claim 1, wherein said shell is further configured to present items selected from said plurality of items according to an explorer display view.

20. The computer system of Claim 19, wherein said explorer display view includes one or more decorative properties.

21. The computer system of Claim 19, wherein said explorer display view includes one or more shell display views, and wherein one of said shell display views is utilized to display a set of explorer items.

22. The computer system of Claim 21, wherein said shell display view includes one or more display aspects appropriate for displaying each of said set of explorer items to a user.

23. The computer system of Claim 22, wherein each of said set of explorer items include a common characteristic.

24. The computer system of Claim 21, wherein said explorer display view is configured to utilize a shell display view not included with an explorer to display an item which cannot be displayed according to said one or more shell display views included with said explorer display view.

25. The computer system of Claim 21, wherein said explorer display view is configured to display an explorer item which is not associated with a shell display view according to an item decoration view.

26. The computer system of Claim 21, wherein said explorer display view is configured to display an explorer item which is not associated with an item decoration view according to said default display view.

27. The computer system of Claim 19, wherein said explorer display view includes one or more data queries associated with said explorer display view.

28. The computer system of Claim 19, wherein said explorer display view includes one or more verbs, said verbs being associated with an operation to be performed on a selected explorer item.

29. The computer system of Claim 28, wherein said operation is performed by an application launched to perform said task with respect to said selected explorer item.

30. A computer-implemented method for presenting a plurality of items stored in a universal data store to a user, the method comprising:

accessing said universal data store in response to a request to present one or more of said plurality of items to the user, wherein said plurality of items are stored in accordance with a universal data schema, and wherein at least a portion of said plurality of items contain metadata stored in accordance with an item decoration schema; and

presenting said one or more requested items to the user, wherein a requested item with said corresponding metadata is presented with an item decoration view and wherein a requested item without said corresponding metadata is presented in accordance with a default display view.

31. The method of Claim 30, wherein said metadata includes data indicating one or more decorative aspects associated with presentation of said metadata to a user.

32. The method of Claim 31, wherein presenting a requested item with said corresponding metadata includes presenting said metadata according to one or more of said decorative aspects.

33. The method of Claim 30, wherein said method further comprises presenting a set of items according to a shell decoration view, wherein said set of items includes one or more items having metadata stored in accordance with a first item decoration schema and further includes one or more items having metadata stored in accordance with a second item decoration schema.

34. The method of Claim 33, wherein said shell decoration view includes one or more display aspects appropriate for displaying each of said set of items to a user.

35. The method of Claim 33, wherein presenting said set of items according to a shell decoration view includes presenting an items having an item decoration schema which conflicts with said shell decoration view according to said shell decoration view.

36. The method of Claim 30, wherein said method further comprises presenting items according to an explorer display view.

37. The method of Claim 36, wherein said explorer display view includes one or more decorative properties and one or more shell display views, and wherein one or more of said shell display views are utilized to display a set of explorer items.

38. The method of Claim 37, wherein an item which cannot be displayed according to said one or more shell display views included with said explorer display view is presented according to a shell display view not included with said explorer display view.

39. The method of Claim 37, wherein an item which cannot be displayed according to a shell display view is presented according to an item decoration view.

40. The method of Claim 36, wherein said explorer display view includes one or more verbs, said verbs being associated with an operation to be performed on a selected explorer item.

41. A shell for presenting a plurality of items stored in a universal data store to a user, the shell comprising:

a data store interaction component which retrieves data associated with one or more of said plurality of items from the universal data store in response to a request to present the one or more items to the user, wherein said data is stored in accordance with a universal data schema, and wherein at least a portion of said plurality of items include corresponding metadata which is stored in accordance with an item decoration schema; and

a display presentation component which utilizes said retrieved data to present a display view of said one or more requested items, wherein said display presentation component is configured to present a requested item with said corresponding metadata with an item decoration view and further configured to present a requested items without said corresponding metadata in accordance with a default display view.